

# **Loudoun County Strategic Watershed Management Solutions (SWMS)**

## **Meeting Summary**

June 14, 2006  
Best Western Hotel, Leesburg, VA

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### **Project Overview**

The Strategic Watershed Management Solutions (SWMS) project is designed to be an iterative, adaptive, and collaborative effort to develop a county-wide plan to manage water resources in Loudoun County on a watershed basis. The consensus-building effort involves various groups including government agencies (county, state, and federal), active community and citizen groups, development and commercial groups, agricultural interests, and non-governmental organizations. The strategic plan will be used to develop a subsequent watershed planning effort.

### **Welcome and Updates**

Thirty-eight SWMS Team members gathered for the fourth and final meeting of the Loudoun Strategic Watershed Management Solutions (SWMS) Stakeholder Team. Christine Gyovai, Tanya Denckla Cobb, and Jason Espie, facilitators from the University of Virginia Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN), welcomed participants and provided an overview of the process. The main goals for the final meeting were to review the latest revisions to the Declaration of Cooperation (DOC), chart the next phases of the process, and celebrate and sign the DOC. The group reviewed the consensus decision-making process to reaffirm that the Declaration of Cooperation is a consensus-based document. Then, meeting participants reviewed the May meeting summary and a variety of progress updates were given, which are below.

- *Outreach.* Bruce McGranahan informed the team that individual meetings are being arranged in close coordination with Supervisor Kurtz to update all of the Board of Supervisors and provide them with a full set of documents and information from the SWMS process. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) have received updates about the process. In addition, similar presentations are being arranged for Towns as well as to the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association (NVBIA). The SWMS Team indicated support for conducting extensive outreach to the Towns to inform them of the process, with the hopes they will be able to support the SWMS concepts and ideas and help coordinate and support the watershed planning effort as a whole. In addition, Kelly Baty gave a presentation to the Fairfax Water Authority at the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB) in Rockville, Maryland, on June 1. Meeting participants included the Maryland Department of Environmental Protection, ICPRB, EPA, VA DEQ and VA DCR, among others. The group was very enthusiastic about Loudoun County's effort to manage stormwater through the watershed planning process, and looks forward to potential future partnerships.
- *Evaluations.* Ms. Denckla Cobb introduced evaluation forms for the process to the group, stating that they were important for both the facilitators and project funders for improving similar processes in the future, and indicated that they would be collected and then tabulated after the meeting.

## Review of the Declaration of Cooperation (DOC)

The group then reviewed the most recent version of the Declaration of Cooperation (DOC), starting with the Executive Summary section. The facilitators stressed that this was the last time the SWMS Team would have an opportunity to review the language contained in the DOC in person. The substantive changes incorporated at the meeting would be the final version to which the signatory pages and commitment statements would be appended. There were some general discussion points prior to the group reviewing specific changes or language in the DOC. A number of main points of discussion or changes regarding the DOC are elaborated below. All changes, substantive and grammatical, made by the group are reflected in the final DOC:

- The SWMS Team discussed the wording in the DOC regarding whether the BOS would “appoint” or “recognize” the Steering Committee (SC), related to the second point in the Executive Summary. There was acknowledgement that both possibilities have advantages or drawbacks, specifically that an appointed steering committee may have more access to County staff and resources. However, the majority of meeting participants felt that the several stakeholders who would be serving on the SC are already working together on watershed planning in Loudoun County, and it made more sense to formally establish the Steering Committee and request the BOS to then recognize the group. The suggestion to use the wording requesting that the BOS “recognize” the SC was made and approved by consensus vote, and these changes are reflected in the final DOC. Others noted that the SC is, or should be, a broadly-representative and balanced group. Participants noted that SC should not be constituted only with government entities, as there needs to be greater involvement of citizens and landowners in the County. Some noted that the SC should not be self-appointed, and careful attention needs to be given to how it is formed (the issue of SC composition and formation was discussed in greater length later in the meeting, see below for further detail.)
- There was considerable discussion regarding language in the Summary of the DOC which referred to zoning and land use. In particular, the removal of the italicized portions of this sentence was discussed at length, “Including watershed management planning in the comprehensive plan improves decision-making, ~~helps establish policies that will drive needed zoning amendments, and will better connect and integrate water resource goals with other plan goals.~~” There was consensus vote that this portion of the sentence should be removed, but that the meeting summary should reflect that there are a host of land use tools beyond zoning that are important for watershed planning and management. The last part of the sentence was struck because some participants felt that the DOC was not an appropriate place for land use language regarding watershed planning.
- Some participants expressed concern about the feasibility of a cost-benefit analysis that was in Section II of the DOC. Participants noted that while this is important, it may not be feasible. SWMS Team members agreed to recommend that the SC conduct the cost-benefit analysis during the watershed planning process as part of its prioritization efforts, based on information that Fairfax County has successfully used cost-benefit analyses in their watershed planning efforts.
- In Section V, 3.1 “Tier III: Subwatershed Implementation Plans,” the group agreed to remove specific reference to the Center for Watershed Protection to allow the next phase of watershed planning more flexibility to select a variety of protocols developed by more than one organization. In addition, in the same section, there was discussion over the wording

*“based on projected future impacts.”* After discussion, there was agreement that the wording *“with preference given to headwater subwatersheds, drinking water sources, and vulnerability potential”* would sufficiently encompass how vulnerable areas should be prioritized and it should replace the above phrase.

- Bill Hatzer of Toll Brothers shared an article with the group that makes the case that density does not necessarily degrade water quality. Otto Guttenson of EPA also noted that EPA has a number of documents and literature that address density and water quality and how these goals can both be accomplished together with success.
- In Section VIII, A. “Need for Criteria,” some concerns were raised on what happens if two listed priorities conflict. Other team members explained that this was simply a list of priorities identified and the SC would be charged with giving priority weight and making decisions regarding this list of suggested criteria. Additionally, the group decided to strike one criterion regarding road and stream crossings as the Team agreed it was not appropriate for inclusion in the priority list.
- In Section IX, B. “Dedicated Funding” the group agreed to strike the specific reference to the Fairfax model of dedicated funding, which read *“The Fairfax County model of property tax allocation may provide a good model of watershed planning funding.”*
- For DOC Sections XIV and XV there was discussion about how the Towns could best be involved in the watershed planning effort. One participant asked if the Coalition of Loudoun Towns (COLT) was still active, and the response was that it still is. Amendments were made to both of these sections in the DOC to emphasize greater involvement and cooperation with the Towns in future watershed planning and implementation activities. The group noted that outreach and involvement efforts with COLT were part of the next phase of watershed planning.
- In Section XV, D. “Implementation Steering Committee,” there was discussion around the relationship between the watershed planning Steering Committee and the implementation committee that would oversee the implementation of the watershed plan and continue the work of the Steering Committee. The group agreed to amend the language in the DOC to reflect that the implementation committee may be made up of members from the Steering Committee and it would transition from the SC, but that it could include new members as needed.
- The group agreed to strike the Section XVIII. “Issues Requiring Further Discussion,” as no team member requested that an item be included in this section.

## **Inventory of Watershed Activities**

Jason Espie of IEN provided an update of the Inventory and Analysis of Watershed Activities database, which will be included in the SWMS Final Report. Several organizations and individuals had been contacted regarding specific watershed activities and requested to provide some form of metric or measurable explanation for their activity. An excel spreadsheet was handed out at the meeting which contained some of the feedback already received from various groups. Not every activity had a measurable result or impact on the watershed, so not all activities were included in the Analysis. Attendees were invited to submit final changes by the end of the week of June 14<sup>th</sup> for final inclusion in the report that would be generated from this Inventory excel sheet. If participants needed the original excel spreadsheet again, Mr. Espie offered to email it to them.

## Signatory Pages and Commitments

Christine Gyovai provided a brief explanation of the signatory pages and the Organization Commitment section of the DOC, noting that there may have been some confusion about what was expected. She acknowledged that there were many different organizations involved in the process and that not everyone would be able to make the same commitments or provide signatory pages. It was understood that maximum flexibility was needed with regards to signatory pages and commitment statements. Nevertheless, participants were encouraged to sign a signatory page individually or on behalf of their organization; the signatory page supports the basic principles outlined in the Executive Summary (and may be found at the end of the DOC in the final report, which will be distributed electronically). These signatory pages could include individual amendments, clauses or an optional paragraph to clarify whether the signature is for an individual or organization. If an organization had also prepared a specific commitment statement for Appendix C of the DOC, then this was also enthusiastically welcomed (these may be found in the final report in Appendix C of the DOC).

## Steering Committee Composition Discussion and Recommendations

The second goal of this final SWMS Team meeting was to outline the next steps and specifically the composition and structure of the Steering Committee as recommended by the DOC. The discussions and general agreement from previous SWMS meetings was that the Steering Committee would commence its work in September 2006, and serving on it would potentially entail a 9 to 18 month commitment. An Interim Bridge committee of volunteers from the current SWMS team will help carry the momentum and prepare efforts for the formation and convening of the Steering Committee in September. This Interim Bridge group was formed at a later point in the meeting. The facilitators asked participants to review the draft organizational and communications charts for the Steering Committee in Appendix 2 of the DOC, created by David Ward from the results of a small working group at the May meeting. A few word changes and narrative explanation for the charts were discussed and minor changes and explanations were agreed upon, and they have been incorporated into the DOC in Appendix 2. These charts reflect the versions of the Steering Committee Organizational and Communications concept diagrams that the SWMS team recommends by consensus.

The facilitators handed out a list of groups that have been identified through the SWMS process as potential interests that need to be represented on the Steering Committee. The group then discussed other more detailed elements of the Steering Committee such as its composition, size, and potential method of decision making, and the following points reflect the Teams' ideas and recommendations for the future Steering Committee (SC):

- **High Interest.** The SWMS team should be cautious about identifying a list of specific interest groups that should be represented on the SC without first determining whether these groups want to participate in the watershed planning process. As committees generally lose members over time, if there are lesser degrees of interest or commitment stated by a group initially, it may not be appropriate for them to serve on the Steering Committee. Interest level, role, and relationship should be taken into consideration in developing the SC.
- **Size and use of Subcommittees.** The SWMS Team discussed at length the potential size of the SC. Participants noted that having 30-35 people or organizations may be too large of a

group; even with 20-25 persons, meetings can become unwieldy but the group indicated that this smaller number may be a more manageable size for the SC. A recommendation was made to keep the number of SC members as small as possible, hopefully 20-25 people, but no consensus was reached as it was felt that a final decision would need to be reached by the Interim Bridge committee. Some noted that the SWMS Team had far more members and that it was able to manage discussions well. However, the group noted that additional representation may be accomplished through participation in subcommittees that meet separately; and thus, the SC could expand its inclusion of other interests and technical expertise. Ultimately, the SC itself will need to decide whether its membership should be expanded.

- **Technical or Advisory members.** It was agreed that it might be neither efficient nor necessary for some of the larger state or federal agencies, such as DEQ, to serve as regular SC members. The group suggested that there could be designated ‘advisory’ or ‘resource’ persons that could participate or present technical expertise on regular basis. In this case it may not be as important to have *all* potential interests serve on a SC if some could be included and designated to be ‘technical’ or ‘advisory’ role in support of the Steering Committee.
- **Decision Making: Majority Voting vs. Consensus.** Meeting participants acknowledged that the number and composition of SC members is related to how it makes decisions. If decision making is by majority voting, then more attention is needed for SC composition to obtain a strong balance of interests to avoid a one-sided Committee. If the decisions are made by consensus—in the same manner as the SWMS Team has operated—where one member can block a vote and everyone’s voice is equal, then there could be more flexibility in creating the composition of the Steering Committee. There was general agreement that the SWMS Team favored consensus decision-making and the Team recommends this for the SC, but noted that the SC should be allowed to establish its own methods of decision-making protocols.
- **Balanced Participation is Critical.** The issue of ensuring that balanced interests serve on the SC was raised many times by meeting participants. Numerous SWMS participants noted that more citizens, agricultural groups and development interests need to be involved in the next phase of watershed planning. For example, several people in the business community and Homeowners Associations were invited to participate in the SWMS process, but could not attend day meetings. The group noted that it is generally easier for local or state government persons to participate in full day meetings that relate to their job responsibilities. Participants noted that there may be creative ways to hold Steering Committee at flexible or different meeting times, or to alternate groups that meet separately and report back to the larger group. It was noted that different interest groups are available to meet at different times, and the SC should take this into consideration when determining meeting times.
- **Public Involvement Example: Frederick, Maryland.** Ed Gorski of PEC described one example of a watershed public involvement process that had two committees that met separately. One was a citizen stakeholder committee of just citizens that was constituted for a given subwatershed. These groups would band or disband as their work was completed. The second was an on-going technical advisory committee made up of state, federal agency and local government staff that was retained throughout all twelve of the subwatershed plans. The technical group provided support and facilitation for the citizen groups as they formed to create specific subwatershed plans and recommendations.

- **Public Involvement Example: Fairfax County.** Matt Meyers of Fairfax County explained their process involves having Citizen Steering Committees or Citizen Advisory Groups for fifteen watershed planning efforts, and the County then provides technical support through staff, engineering consultants and facilitation consultants. There is a citizens group for each subwatershed plan, while the County staff is consistent for each citizen group. The County staff will eventually compile the fifteen plans to consolidate county-wide policies and programs.
- **Suggestion for a Two-Tiered Involvement Approach.** The group noted that the existing SWMS full contact list (which includes everyone who was contacted and invited to participate in the SWMS process) is a good and fairly comprehensive starter list for potential SC member composition. Participants stated that there could be two tiers of SC involvement, one tier that participates in SC meetings and one that is consistently informed or given presentations by SC members. This could be achieved through an updated website, list serve, individual presentations or through occasional forums to inform, invite input, and comment on SC progress.
- **Composition.** This is a list presented by IEN and discussed and added to by the SWMS Team:
  - Support was voiced for considering the existing full SWMS Contact list (*which includes many of the groups listed below*).
  - County Environmental Program Coordinator
  - Loudoun County government
    - At least one member of the Board of Supervisors
    - One Planning Commission member
    - County departments: Schools, Parks, Building and Development, Planning, General Services, Mapping, etc. (see below)
    - *Suggestions for County department representation on SC.* Because there are so many County departments with a vested interest in watershed planning, a suggestion was made to limit them to just two SC representatives to speak on behalf of all County staff. If this is the case, then these representatives will need to speak for multiple departments and the County may wish to develop its own internal communications mechanism (such as an inter-agency committee or County Water Caucus) to coordinate their input and representation on the SC. Another suggestion was to just have one county staff liaison – one “shining voice” – for all departments. The representative County staff position(s) could even be rotating over time to allow for diversity.
  - Loudoun Towns - All seven Towns should be invited, whether or not they all are voting members; Towns should be included as voting members on subwatershed committees.
  - Loudoun County Sanitation Authority
  - Development Community
    - Environmental Consultants
    - Engineering
    - Northern Virginia Building Industry Association (NVBIA)
    - Heavy Construction Contractors Association (HCCA)

- Individuals/companies
  - National Organization of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP)
- Farming and Agricultural community
- Business Community
  - Manufacturing and industrial
  - Economic development
  - Solid waste
- Conservation community
  - Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy
  - PEC
  - Loudoun Watershed Watch
  - Goose Creek Scenic Advisory
- Homeowner associations and other citizen groups
- State agency representation (may be considered advisory or technical support; some are willing to be advisory and to attend when needed)
- Federal agency representation (may be considered advisory or technical support)
- Regional government representation (LSWCD, Metro COG, NoVa Regional Commission)
- Neighboring Counties
- Citizens-at-large

**Steering Committee Formation Proposal:** The SWMS Team acknowledged that the list above is broad, and many of the interests did not participate in the SWMS process. It is important to members of the SWMS Team that the SC is broadly-representative, and that all interested and needed parties are able to participate on the SC. In addition, SWMS Team members suggested that the SC have facilitators involved in the process from the beginning to ensure effective and productive meetings and to help facilitate decision-making through consensus. The Team suggested that to form the Steering Committee, the Interim Bridge Committee or the County could send out a letter, on behalf of the SWMS team, to individuals and organizations on the SWMS contact list, and other appropriate groups, to invite them to a convening meeting for the Steering Committee. At this meeting, the group could determine if any other groups need to participate in the process, or how to increase or decrease the size and composition of the Steering Committee as needed. The group agreed to this proposal.

### **Interim Bridge Committee**

To accomplish the work that is needed to follow-up with the effort of the SWMS Team and in preparation of the formation of the Steering Committee, the group agreed that an Interim Bridge Committee was needed. A group of volunteers from the SWMS Team agreed to coordinate together as this Committee to carry the momentum forward, help educate and inform the BOS, Towns, HOAs, and other groups about the principals and intentions for the watershed planning process as expressed in the DOC. This group would also work with the County staff to send invitational letters and convene the meeting that will create the Steering Committee. Daytime meeting were recommended for this group, and if necessary, people could participate via conference call. Bruce McGranahan will contact volunteers regarding next steps. The volunteers for the Interim Bridge Committee are:

- **Randy Vlad**, Loudoun County Public Schools - Construction, 571-252-1298, [rvlad@loudoun.gov](mailto:rvlad@loudoun.gov)
- **Gem Bingol**, The Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC), office: 540-955-9000; 703-669-2205 - cell: 703-431-6941, [gbingol@pecva.org](mailto:gbingol@pecva.org)
- **Bruce McGranahan**, Environmental Program Coordinator, Loudoun County Planning Department, 703-737-8511, [bmcgrana@loudoun.gov](mailto:bmcgrana@loudoun.gov)
- **Randy Williford**, Chief of Stormwater Management, Loudoun County Public Works, 703-737-8686, [RWILLIFO@loudoun.gov](mailto:RWILLIFO@loudoun.gov)
- **Chris Van Vlack**, Loudoun County Soil & Water Conservation District, 703-777-2075 ext. 107, [chris.vanvlack@va.nacdnet.net](mailto:chris.vanvlack@va.nacdnet.net)
- **James Mackie**, Loudoun County Environmental Health, Environmental Engineering and Policy Development, 703-737-8931, [JMACKIE@loudoun.gov](mailto:JMACKIE@loudoun.gov)
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- **Mark Peterson**, Luck Stone Corporation, 571-233-1703-Cell- / 703-554-6162 Office), [Mpeterson@Luckstone.Com](mailto:Mpeterson@Luckstone.Com)
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## Signatory Celebration and Sharing

After much hard work and discussion, the SWMS Team celebrated! Having completed the final revisions to the DOC, outlining recommendations for a Steering Committee, and forming an Interim Bridge Committee, the SWMS team celebrated its accomplishments by sharing a cake and signing and submitting signatory pages and/or organizational commitments for appending to the final DOC. The signature pages and organizational commitments may be found in the Final Report.

Additionally, SWMS Team members reflected on their participation in the SWMS effort and their hopes for the next phase of watershed planning. Meeting facilitators stated that the Final Report would be completed at the end of June and distributed electronically to SWMS Team members, and via postal mail to those that requested it. Additionally, past meeting summaries and other resources may be found at the SWMS website: <http://www.loudoun.gov/b&d/watershed.htm>. SWMS Team members were enthusiastically thanked for their hard work and dedication to the SWMS process, and team members expressed hope and anticipated both important and hard work in the next phase of watershed planning.





*Caption: Participants of the June 2006 SWMS team present the celebratory cake at the fourth and final meeting of the strategic planning process. The three fingers people are holding up represent the hand signal for “fully support” that was used for polling in consensus during various parts of the multi-month process.*

**List of Participants of the June 14, 2006 SWMS Meeting.** 38 SWMS Team members attended this meeting.

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### **Conservation & Environmental Groups**

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